

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 872

By Woodson

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize the ladies of General Federated Women's Club Ossoli Circle upon the occasion of the club's 125th anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should specially recognize those exemplary clubs and organizations that are comprised of concerned citizens who are dedicated to improving the quality of life in their respective communities; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable organization that evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all its endeavors is General Federated Women's Club (GFWC) Ossoli Circle of Knoxville, which will celebrate its 125th Anniversary on November 22, 2010; and

WHEREAS, Ossoli Circle was organized on November 20, 1885, when Lizzie Crozier French met with twelve women to form a literary society intended to advance their intellectual and moral development through organization; and

WHEREAS, at the suggestion of their first president, Mary Boyce Temple, the members decided to name their organization in honor of New England intellectual and women's rights advocate Margaret Fuller Ossoli; and

WHEREAS, from 1885 to 1890, the Tennessee Female Institute, where Lizzie Crozier French was principal, served as the first home of Ossoli Circle; and

WHEREAS, Lizzie Crozier French traveled by train to New York City to place Ossoli Circle's vote for the General Federated Women's Clubs in 1889; and

WHEREAS, Mary Boyce Temple, who was educated in the library of her father, Judge Oliver P. Temple, and at Vassar, where she graduated in the class of 1877, led Ossoli Circle for its first five years; and

WHEREAS, Mary Boyce Temple traveled by train to New York City with Mrs. Samuel McKinney to attend the first GFWC convention as one of two Southern delegates; they helped to organize the General Federated Women's Clubs, and Mary Boyce Temple was elected the first Corresponding Secretary of GFWC in 1890, when it was chartered, and Ossoli Circle became the first General Federated Women's Club in the South; and

WHEREAS, by 1893, membership in Ossoli Circle had grown to seventy-five, and in 1896, Ossoli Circle issued a call for delegates from the state's sixteen women's clubs to meet in Knoxville and organize the Tennessee Federation of Women's Clubs; and

WHEREAS, Ossoli Circle's accomplishments in the early twentieth century included the establishment of traveling libraries, aid to mountain schools, improvement of the laws of Tennessee that affected women, the establishment of a state vocational school for girls, and the Ossoli Story Telling League for Children; and

WHEREAS, in 1933, Ossoli Circle moved into its own clubhouse, where it continues to be a cultural and intellectual center for Knoxville women; and

WHEREAS, designed by the famed Knoxville architect Charles Barber of Barber & McMurray, the clubhouse has hosted countless meetings, parties, plays, concerts, and weddings since its completion; and

WHEREAS, because of its meticulously crafted structure and beautiful design, the clubhouse hasn't changed much over the years; the clubhouse features an auditorium that seats up to 320 people, as well as comfortable rooms, which house antiques and artwork that have belonged to the club since its earliest days; and

WHEREAS, in 1985, the clubhouse was added to the National List of Historic Places; this distinction engendered great pride among the women of Ossoli Circle, who are tremendously thankful to have such a beautiful clubhouse with such a rich history in which to hold their meetings; and

WHEREAS, comprised of women who strive to better themselves and their community, Ossoli Circle now boasts more than 200 members and offers its support to a number of local charities and organizations; as it has since 1885, the club meets on Monday of each week; and

WHEREAS, the ladies of Ossoli Circle have extended their philanthropy to a wide variety of worthwhile programs and causes, including Angel Tree, Child Help USA, ET Children's Hospital, ET Historical Society, Friends of the Library, Friends of Literacy, GFWC Women's History/Resource Center, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Habitat for Humanity, Heifer International, Hospital and Senior Resident Support, Imagination Library, Interfaith Health Clinic, Knox County Schools (Art and Poetry Contests), Knox County Schools Read-With-Me Program, Knox Area Rescue Ministry Serenity Shelter, Knoxville Green, Knoxville Opera Company, Knoxville Symphony League, Mission of Hope, Operation Smile, Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, Second Harvest, Suffragist Coalition, UNICEF, Unicorn Fund, Volunteer Ministry Center, Wesley House Community Center, the Young-Williams Animal Shelter, and has given scholarships to individuals in Appalachia, Sudan, and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, as befits their sterling reputation earned through 125 years of dedicated public service, the members of Ossoli Circle have worked countless hours to make their community a vibrant and compassionate place of which every resident can be proud; and

WHEREAS, the members of this laudable organization are wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State"; and

WHEREAS, as ambassadors of those very precepts, the women of GFWC Ossoli Circle should be specially recognized on the occasion of their 125th year of proud service to their community and the greater Knoxville area; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby join with the members of GFWC Ossoli Circle in celebrating the club's 125th anniversary, commend them for their exemplary service to their community, this State, and our Nation, and wish them much continued success in their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.